

Week Ending Friday, August 15, 2008

Remarks in Beijing, China

August 9, 2008

Situation in Georgia

I'm deeply concerned about the situation in Georgia. The United States takes this matter very seriously.

The attacks are occurring in regions of Georgia far from the zone of conflict in South Ossetia. They mark a dangerous escalation in the crisis. The violence is endangering regional peace. Civilian lives have been lost, and others are endangered.

This situation can be resolved peacefully. We've been in contact with leaders in both Georgia and Russia at all levels of government. Georgia is a sovereign nation, and its territorial integrity must be respected. We have urged an immediate halt to the violence and a standdown by all troops. We call for an end to the Russian bombings and a return by the parties to the status quo of August the 6th.

The United States is working with our European partners to launch international mediation and with the parties to restart their dialog. Russia needs to support these efforts so that peace can be restored as quickly as possible.

Attack on American Tourists

Laura and I were also saddened by the attack on an American family and their Chinese tour guide today in Beijing. Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims and their families. And the United States Government has offered to provide any assistance the family needs.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:20 p.m. at the Westin Beijing Chaoyang hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Todd and Barbara Bachman, who were attacked while touring the Drum Tower in Beijing.

The President's Radio Address

August 9, 2008

Good morning. I'm speaking to you from Beijing, where I've come to support American athletes participating in the Olympic games. This is a moment of pride for our Olympians and the great Nation they represent, and Laura and I are honored to share it with them.

In addition to attending the Olympics, my schedule includes meeting with China's President, dedicating a new U.S. Embassy in Beijing, and worshipping at a local church. During my time here, I'm expressing America's deep concerns about freedom and human rights in China. This trip has reaffirmed my belief that men and women who aspire to speak their conscience and worship their God are no threat to the future of China; they are the people who will make China a great nation in the 21st century.

One of the most striking parts of this trip is seeing how much China has changed. I first visited the country more than three decades ago, when my dad was America's representative in Beijing. Poverty was rampant, and the streets swarmed with bicycles. Today, China is sprinting into the modern era. Beijing is covered in skyscrapers and filled with cars, and the people of China have more connections to the world than ever before.

These changes present the Chinese people, the American people, and the world with tremendous opportunities. So over the past 8 years, America has sought to put our relationship with China on a more solid and principled footing. We've advanced both our nations' interests by expanding free and fair trade and encouraging the rise of a Chinese middle class, which can be an enormous market for American exports. We have also cooperated on other shared challenges, from fighting pandemic disease to opposing North Korea's nuclear weapons programs.

At the same time, America has spoken candidly and consistently about our concerns over the Chinese Government's behavior. We have made it clear that trusting their people with greater freedom is necessary for China to reach its full potential. We have emphasized that being a global economic leader carries with it the duty to act responsibly on matters from energy to the environment to development and Africa.

Only China can decide what course it will follow, but I'm optimistic about the prospects. Young people who grow up with freedom in one area of their lives will ultimately demand freedom in other areas. The China of the future will reflect its own culture and traditions, but it will also reflect the universal aspirations of mankind. And there's no deeper human desire than liberty.

America's relationship with China is one element of our broader strategy for the region. When I took office, I brought a clear conviction that America is a Pacific nation, and our engagement with Asia should be stronger than ever before. We've acted on that conviction by pursuing four broad objectives.

We bolstered all five of our treaty alliances in the Asia Pacific region: Japan, Australia, the Philippines, and two countries I visited this week, South Korea and Thailand. We have strengthened our relationships with other free societies in Asia, including India, the world's largest democracy, and Indonesia, a democratic nation that is home to more Muslims than any other nation on Earth. We have seized opportunities for prosperity by negotiating new free trade agreements, including an historic agreement with South Korea, an agreement which our United States Congress must pass. And we helped bring together nations throughout the Asia Pacific to fight terrorism, seek an end to tyranny in Burma, respond to natural disasters, and address other challenges to our people and our prosperity.

My trips to Asia as President have brought many uplifting moments. One of the most moving came this week in Seoul, when I spoke to American troops at the Yongsan

Garrison. These men and women are carrying the burdens of military life far from home. Yet in their faces you can see a quiet pride that comes from having an important job and doing it right. These brave Americans are preserving peace, and they're sending a broader message about our approach toward Asia. Now and always, the United States will keep our word to our friends. We will stand confidently for liberty. And we will advance our Nation's interests and ideals by staying engaged in this pivotal part of the world.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:20 p.m. on August 7 at Westin Beijing Chaoyang hotel in Beijing, China, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m., e.d.t., on August 9. In his address, the President referred to President Hu Jintao of China. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 8 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. Due to the 12-hour time difference, the radio address was broadcast after the President's remarks in Beijing. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks Following a Visit to the Beijing Kuanjie Protestant Christian Church in Beijing

August 10, 2008

You know, I've just—Laura and I just had the great joy and privilege of worshiping here in Beijing, China. You know, it just goes to show that God is universal, and God is love, and no state, man, or woman should fear the influence of loving religion.

And I want to thank the pastor for his hospitality. And I want to thank this beautiful choir for singing "Amazing Grace" and "Edelweiss." It was a touching moment. It's been a joy to worship here. Again, I want to thank you, sir, and God bless you. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:07 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Pastor Li Jian'an, senior pastor, Beijing Kuanjie Protestant Christian Church.